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Letter No. 2211

May 2, 1985

PLANTING
IN USSR

In the Soviet Union, the spring seeding pace improved during the third week of April, but the overall area planted continued to lag behind recent years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Soviets reported that as of April 22 spring crops had been seeded on 19.2 million hectares, including 10.5 million of small grains and pulses. No planting data was reported for corn, but it is known to be late. The long, cold winter and late spring are among the reasons for the lag in spring planting.

OPERATING LOANS
HIT PEAK

U.S. Department of Agriculture operating loans to finance 1985 crops are running at record levels, according to Frank Naylor, Under Sec'y of Agriculture for Small Community and Rural Development. Naylor said, "In a little more than half of this fiscal year, USDA's FmHA has reached a peak operating loan level of \$2.6 billion. The current operating loan level more than triples that of the entire 1981 fiscal year, or \$847 million. The total for this year could reach the \$3 billion mark."

USSR SHIPBOARD
FUMIGATION

Under Sec'y of Agriculture Daniel Amstutz met with a four-man delegation from the Soviet, which had visited the U.S. for 10 days, concerning matters of U.S. grain quality, particularly insect infestation. As a result of the visit, the Soviet's grain buying agency will undertake an experimental shipment of U.S. grain using in-transit fumigation to control insect infestation. Shipboard fumigation is a practice widely used on U.S. grain shipments to other destinations.

ARGENTINE
WHEAT & COARSE
GRAIN EXPORTS

During a period, which began in early 1980, the proportion of Argentine shipments of wheat and coarse grains to Latin American and other destinations declined, while shipments to the USSR increased, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In the past year the proportion going to Latin America has returned for the first time to the pre-1980 level. Shipments to the USSR remain large, but have fallen to about 41 pct. from the previous high of 79 pct. It is expected Argentina will continue to increase its grain exports to Latin America, which would have an important effect on the U.S. and other suppliers.

9-3/8 PCT.
LOAN RATE

Commodity loans disbursed in May by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 9-3/8 pct. interest rate. The new rate is down from 9-3/4 pct.

OATS REMOVED
FROM RELEASE
STATUS

Producers may no longer repay loans without penalty on farmer-owned reserve oats, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The prices were adjusted to reflect the market price received by farmers on May 1. The national average adjusted price of \$1.61 per bushel for oats on May 1 was 4 cents below the reserve release level. Storage payments for reserve oats were resumed in all states.

U.S. CORN
EXPORTS

The U.S. corn export forecast--excluding 400,000 tons of products--remains at 49.1 million tons this month, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Additional purchases by the Soviet Union were offset by weakness in other traditional U.S. markets, particularly the European Community. Corn shipments are down slightly from last month, marking the third consecutive month of declines, but continue to exceed last year's levels. Corn sales dropped off sharply this month as the Soviet Union curtailed purchases.

WHEAT EXPORT
FORECAST

As of mid-April, the U.S. wheat export forecast--excluding 1.8 million tons of products--remains unchanged at 37.7 million tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Other than Japan and Korea, most buyers of U.S. wheat during the past month were P.L. 480 recipients. Morocco bought additional French wheat and Turkey, Jordan and Brazil turned to Argentina for their import needs.

U.S. SOYBEANS
TO SPAIN

Spain's total soybean imports during November 1984-January 1985 were down 22 pct. from a year earlier, and the U.S. market share was down 11 pct., according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Spain's exports of soybean oil were down 61 pct. The Spanish crushers attribute the fall in soybean oil exports to competition from Brazilian soybean oil and Argentine sunflowerseed oil and lower purchases from India and Pakistan. USDA currently estimates 1984/85 Spanish soybean imports at 2.65 million tons, compared with 2.59 million in 1983/84.

WHEAT COUNCIL
BUDGET

The Wheat Industry Council budget for a nationally coordinated wheat foods research and nutrition education program will be \$1.1 million in fiscal year 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program is financed by assessing manufacturers of wheat end products one cent per hundredweight for wheat they have bought since June 1, 1981. USDA monitors the activities of the council.

PURCHASE RATES
FOR 1985-CROP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture issued county loan and purchase rates for 1985-crop wheat and barley based on the national average rates announced earlier of \$3.30 per bushel for No. 1 grade wheat and \$2.08 per bushel for barley graded No. 2 or better. Copies of the rate schedules for counties are available from the cotton, grain and rice price support division, USDA-ASCS, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SEERVICE

GYPSY MOTH UPDATE...Gary Moorehead, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Serv., talks about the integrated system of pest management set up by the Department in all projects to eradicate or suppress the gypsy moth. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (371)

USSR OUTLOOK...The value of U.S. agricultural exports to the Soviet Union almost doubled from 1983 to 1984. USDA economist Kathryn Zeimetz focuses on factors contributing to these export increases. Vic Powell interviews. (372)

U.S. RICE INDUSTRY...USDA economist Barbara Stucker describes the importance of the rice crop to American agriculture, and some of the issues currently facing the rice industry with the upcoming farm bill. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (373)

LIGHTNING DETECTION SYSTEM...Steve German, ALDS project manager, talks about research work being conducted in Boise, Idaho, with the "Automatic Lightning Detection System", or ALDS, to detect and possibly prevent forest fires. Vic Powell interviews. (374)

NATIONAL 4-H CONFERENCE...Lisa Medeiros, a 4-H member from Seekonk, Mass., describes her involvement with international 4-H, and how she feels this program can help more youth like herself in the future. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (375)

EMERGENCY
LOANS TO
TEXAS

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block named 10 counties in Texas as eligible for Farmers Home Admin. emergency loans because of a combination of severe freezing weather and drought. Also eligible were 7 contiguous counties. Farmers and ranchers have eight months in which to apply for the loans to help cover part of their actual losses.

PRICES RECEIVED
INDEX DOWN

The April All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers decreased 2 points - that's 1.5 pct. - from March 1985 to 132 pct. of its Jan.-Dec. 1977 average, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Lower prices for cattle, hogs, milk, eggs and tomatoes were partially offset by higher prices for potatoes, corn, grapefruit and sorghum. The index was 14 points - that's 9.6 pct. - below a year ago. (For more statistical info, call 202-447-5446.)

PRICES PAID
INDEX UNCHANGED

The Index of Prices Paid by Farmers for Commodities and Services, Interest, Taxes and Farm Wage Rates for April was 164 pct. of its 1977 average, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The index was unchanged from a month earlier but was down 1 point from April 1984. The fuels and energy and family living indexes for April were up from a month ago. Offsetting were slight decreases from March by the feed and feeder livestock components and a moderate decline in the seed index that is updated in April and Sept. of each year. (For more statistical info, call 202-447-5446.)

OFF MIKE

We promised to give a sneak preview of the summer NAFB meeting, so here goes. Registration will take place beginning at 2 p.m., July 10. Plans right now call for a reception that evening at the Soviet Embassy. Negotiations are still underway. Thursday, July 11, will be "newsmaker" day when various speakers from the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch will appear, including Sec'y of Agric, John Block and U.S. Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter. Friday, July 12, will be spent on the Eastern Shore learning more about the famous Chesapeake Bay. Dinner that night will be an Eastern Shore crab/oyster/chicken affair. So, you see it promises to be an eventful and memorable occasion. Saturday is an open day after a business breakfast. If you want to visit the White House, contact your Congressmen right away. They only have a limited number of passes to give out each day ... Award announcement time: Orion Samuelson (WGN, Chicago, IL) received the 1985 Ambassador of Agriculture award from the Midstates Regional Women of Associated Milk Producers. Dick Palmer (WWLS, Norman, OK) received Oklahoma FFA's highest award, the Honorary State Farmer Degree at their annual convention in Oklahoma City. Our congratulations! ... We were doing a bit of calling around to notify farm broadcasters who do television that we would be having a Television Press Conference via Satellite event May 2. In doing so, we learned that Wayne Rothgeb (WKJB-TV, Fort Wayne, IN) would not be available, because he would be accompanying kindergarten kids to farms. It's an annual four-day event in which the station takes about 10,000 kids on a farm tour ... Bill Wills is the new farm director at WLW, Cincinnati, OH. He took Bob Ziegler's place. Bob is back in Lima, OH, at WIMA as program director. Bill worked 4 years as farm director at Wilmington, OH, before moving to WLW.

FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA 1457...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) At a time when many agri-businesses are having a hard time the turkey industry is thriving. George Holmes talks to different experts in the field.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1446...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Pressures on small farms; Nicaragua Part 1 and 2; 1986 wheat referendum

CONSUMER TIME #939...(Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) Gardening for the first time; Vegetables in your azalea bed!; Preserving historic buildings; Rising U.S. imports; Window on the past.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Fri, May 10, Crop production report; Tues, May 14, Weekly weather and crop summary; Wed, May 15, Milk production report; Fri, May 17, Ag. outlook report. Dial the USDA National News Line 202/488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.



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